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ABSTRACT

This study assesses the process of faculty socialization at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), asking how faculty at these institutions perceive their socialization experiences, what kinds of institutional characteristics affect faculty socialization, and what are the major barriers to promotion and tenure faced by African Americans at HBCUs. Interviews were conducted with 17 respondents selected from 4 institutions of varying size, location, type, and funding source. Qualitative analysis of the data revealed several common themes: (1) faculty believe that clear institutional values and expectations are important factors in the socialization process; (2) faculty also perceived that one barrier in the socialization experience was senior faculty not showing new faculty the ropes of the institution; and (3) faculty also identified heavy workloads as a major barrier in the promotion and tenure process. (Contains 32 references.) (MKA)

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IMPROVING FACULTY SOCIALIZATION: INFLUENCES AND BARRIERS AND HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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IMPROVING FACULTY SOCIALIZATION: INFLUENCES AND BARRIERS AND HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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OVERVIEW

Introduction

One of the roles of college and university faculty members is to advise their students and to socialize them into the culture of postsecondary education. At historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), faculty are expected to nurture students but it is unknown if they themselves receive any nurturing from their senior faculty colleagues. Research has disclosed that new faculty at traditionally white institutions cite isolation and a lack of collegiality as barriers to their transition to the institution (Boice, 1992). However, very little is known about the environment faculty at HBCUs encounter. Do new faculty at HBCUs find a nurturing and caring environment, or are they left to figure out on their own what is necessary to be successful?

Socialization, as defined by Merton (1957), is a process through which individuals acquire the values, attitudes, norms, knowledge, and skills needed to exist in a given society. The process of socialization begins when a new faculty member enters the organization, then occurs continuously, either implicitly or explicitly. The study presented here attempted to gain insight into the socialization of faculty at HBCUs, particularly African-American faculty.

To assess the process of socialization at HBCUs, the following research questions were addressed: How do faculty at these institutions perceive their socialization experiences? What major institutional characteristics (size, location, etc.) affect faculty socialization? What are the major barriers in the promotion and tenure process of African-American faculty at HBCUs?

Significance

Roebuck and Murty (1993) report that fifty-five percent of full-time African-American faculty are concentrated at the 109 HBCUs which comprise only 3 percent of the United States' educational institutions. Historically black colleges and universities employ faculty from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. In fact, Caucasians and other minorities and foreigners account for 40 and 5 percent, respectively, of the faculty at HBCUs (Roebuck & Murty, 1993). Given the diversity of faculty at HBCUs the reader might presume that a body of research on faculty would be available but few studies in any form have been conducted that focused on this subgroup of the professoriate. Findings from this study could also provide the foundation for assessing the socialization experiences of other faculty subgroups at HBCUs, i.e., Asian Americans, Hispanics, Caucasians and women, which could lead to the development of theory on faculty socialization at these institutions. This research study is significant because, given the paucity of research on faculty socialization at HBCUs, it begins to fill the void in the literature. Thus, this study will provide a better understanding of the socialization process of African-American faculty at HBCUs and also serve as the foundation for developing a body of literature on the socialization experience of other faculty at HBCUs.

Expectations of Faculty at HBCUs

Historical Overview

It is important to understand the traditional expectations that HBCUs have had of their faculty and what influences contribute to faculty expectations at the present time. In 1890, Harvard created a faculty of arts and sciences that laid the foundation for faculty role expectations at all institutions of higher education. Harvard's creation of a faculty of arts and sciences placed the responsibility of teaching and research on faculty at both the undergraduate

and graduate level (McGrath, 1965). However, it was not until decades later that HBCUs realized the effect of these changes, as they first had to provide a basic elementary and secondary education to African-Americans before they could they could focus on their role as institutions of higher education (Johnson, 1945).

The release of a 1942 report (Blauch & Jenkins, 1943) and the Federal Bureau of Education's 1928 (U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Education, 1929) found that faculty at HBCUs had heavy teaching loads.[1] It is postulated that findings of these reports influenced HBCU faculty to improve their educational background, instructional methods and professional productivity (Bowles & DeCosta, 1971; Johnson, 1945).

A study by Thompson (1960) found that the median teaching load at HBCUs was 15 hours, which is considered to be a heavy load, even if no other duties are required. Additionally, Thompson (1960) concluded that faculty at HBCUs desire to engage in scholarly activities, but he cited the lack of opportunity to engage in research or creative scholarship as a barrier. An earlier study about HBCU faculty discovered that lack of time and financial resources were reasons for non-participation in professional associations and pursuit of scholarly research (Thompson, 1947). African-American faculty cited race as a barrier to their professional development since they were often kept from joining or attending professional association meetings because of their race (Thompson, 1960). Many local, regional and national

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[1] Heavy teaching loads during this time period may be attributed to return of Negro soldiers (GIs) at conclusion of World War II. The enrollment capacity of HBCUs was estimated maximum between 45,000 and 50,000 but with the return of GIs enrollment at HBCUs climbed to 60,000 (Thompson, 1946). Even if HBCUs had been able to increase the number of faculty on the payroll, they were unable to locate enough teachers with master's degrees. Three primary reasons for the teacher shortage focused on men serving in the war, salaries and teaching conditions, employment by Black faculty at colleges in the North and West (see Thompson, 1946, p. 581; Thompson, 1947, p. 2-3).

organizations had policies that prohibited 'Negroes' from joining and when public meetings were held, Negroes were not allowed access to these public places because of the color of their skin.

Contemporary Expectations

Historically black colleges and universities tenure and deny tenure to more African-Americans than other institutions (Fields, 1997). Fields further states that there are perceptions among African-American scholars that the promotion and tenure process at HBCUs may be more difficult than at traditionally white institutions. This perspective is echoed by a faculty senate chair at an HBCU who states, "Too often the perception is that because some HBCUs assume less of a publish-or-perish attitude, their tenure process is less rigorous" (Fields, 1997). Many factors affect the pursuit of tenure at HBCUs, as faculty are often expected to teach heavy course loads (often two or four times that of faculty at many traditionally white institutions), engage in committee work, work with students and publish, depending on the mission of the institution (Fields, 1997).

Thompson (1973) calculated that approximately 90 percent of faculty at HBCUs focused solely on teaching and not research and writing. Reasons faculty at HBCUs may not have been engaged in writing for publication include a lack of resources and time to conduct research and write, publishers who may think there are few readers who are interested in African-American research topics and the lack of pressure from colleagues and administrators at HBCUs (Thompson, 1978).

Roebuck and Murty (1993) found African-American faculty at HBCUs "adjusted well in a familiar milieu that met their personal, social and career needs." This study reported that many African-American faculty members prefer to teach at HBCUs to avoid the status ambiguities and racial conflict they may encounter at traditionally white institutions. African-American faculty in

Roebuck and Murty's study viewed themselves as belonging to an "extended-family academic group" which resulted in feelings of belonging, psychological comfort and success. Their study also found that both African-American and white faculty at HBCUs did not perceive their work as a job but as a career. Billingsley (1982) found one reason that African-American faculty remain at HBCUs is because of the large African-American student population and their desire to educate African-American students as well as to build "strong black faculties." Thompson (1978) confirms this by stating that many white and African-American teachers are "truly dedicated to black youth" and teaching them gives them "deep personal and professional satisfaction."

RESEARCH DESIGN

A qualitative research design was used to explore the socialization experiences of African-American faculty, which allowed the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the socialization process at HBCUs (Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Analysis of the data occurred throughout the project and insights gained during earlier interviews were used to inform later interviews. Information obtained via interviews was subject to triangulation and member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As the purpose of this study was not to portray any single individual or institution but to examine the socialization experience of African-American faculty at HBCUs, data analysis consisted of identifying common themes across all institutions in the study. Using a method discussed by Yin (1994) for analyzing and reporting multiple case studies, the findings and discussion are presented in a cross-case analysis format. Appropriate examples were drawn from the data to support the common themes that emerged.

Site and Sample Selection

Site Selection

Four sites varying in size, location, type and funding source were selected to assess how African-American faculty at HBCUs perceived their socialization experience. Institutions in the sampling frame included, 1) Research University, a private, urban institution with a research focus and large student enrollment (10,000+); 2) Liberal Arts College, a private, liberal arts institution located in a rural area with a small student enrollment (800+); 3) Comprehensive University, an urban, public comprehensive institution with a medium student enrollment (5,000+); and 4) Doctoral University, a rural, public comprehensive institution with a large student enrollment (10,000+). The researcher explored socialization in a variety of contexts to discern if there were any patterns across institutions.

Sample Selection

After site selection choices were made, decisions followed about which individuals to interview. The attributes of interest for selection included gender, tenured or tenure-track, full-time faculty in the social sciences and humanities. The choice was made to assure "variety but not necessarily representativeness . . ." (Stake, 1994, p. 244) across disciplines and gender. A total of seventeen faculty were interviewed, of whom six were tenured and eleven were tenure-track. Table 1 illustrates the gender and tenure status of faculty at each institution in the study.

Research has indicated that faculty in the hard sciences or high consensus fields exhibited greater agreement on standards of scholarship than faculty in low consensus fields (Stoecker, 1993). Thus, faculty in the hard sciences tend to have clearer expectations of what to expect in the promotion and tenure process. Consequently, this study only examined the socialization

experiences of faculty in the low consensus fields in order to control for differences across disciplines.

TABLE 1: INSTITUTIONAL TYPE BY GENDER AND TENURE

INSTITUTION	FEMALE		MALES		TOTAL
	Tenure-Track	Tenured	Tenure-Track	Tenured	
Research (Urban, Private)	2	0	1	1	4
Doctoral (Rural, Public)	1	2	2	0	5
Comprehensive (Urban, Public)	1	2	1	0	4
Liberal Arts (Rural, Private)	1	0	2	1	4
TOTAL	5	4	6	2	17

Limitations

Small sample size, concern for anonymity and change in administrative leadership were limitations of the study. Given the low number of participants (17) and the fact that only four sites were used in the study, care must be taken in the interpretation of the results and their generalizability. Nonetheless, results of this study can be used to guide future research.

FINDINGS

From the analysis of the data collected across institutions, several common themes emerged which addressed the research questions and were found across all institutions regardless of size, type of institution, i.e., research, doctoral, liberal arts, etc., geographic location or major funding source. The key findings are as follows:

- Faculty believed that clear institutional values and expectations were an influencing factor that assisted them in the socialization process.
- Faculty also perceived a barrier in the socialization experience was senior faculty not showing new faculty the ropes of the institution.
- Heavy workload was identified as a major barrier in the promotion and tenure process.

Based on the emergent themes, a portrait of African-American faculty socialization at the four HBCUs in the study begins to emerge. Although no significant gender or institutional characteristics were identified that affected faculty socialization, this does not mean none exist, but suggests further research is warranted. Perceived differences across institutions relative to size, geographic location, institutional type or major funding source will be discussed throughout the analysis.

Perceptions of the Socialization Process

Clear Institutional Expectations and Values

Informal Methods

Upon arrival at their new academic home, new faculty need to gain an understanding of both the formal and informal rules regarding institutional values and role expectations, particularly as they relate to the promotion and tenure process. Exum, Menges, Watkins, and Berglund's study (1984) reported that new faculty sometimes do not learn the norms and expectations until too late in the promotion and tenure process. However, this observation contrasts with what new faculty at HBCUs in this study indicated. According to the following statement found in the Research institution's faculty handbook, new faculty should be informed early of what the expectations are for tenure.

> The precise terms and conditions of every appointment should be stated in writing and be in the possession of both the institution and the teacher before the

> appointment is consummated. Moreover, fairness to probationary faculty member prescribes that they be informed, early in their appointments, of the substantive and procedural standards that will be followed in determining whether or not their appointments will be renewed or tenure will be granted.

New faculty learned what the institutional values and expectations for promotion and tenure were through formal and informal mechanisms via evaluation forms, the faculty handbook or talking to senior faculty and the department chair. Senior faculty informally communicated what the institutional values and expectations were to junior faculty in a spontaneous and casual manner while at lunch, in the hallway or in passing conversation.

A possible reason that senior faculty were supportive of new faculty and shared information about the values and expectations of the institution could be attributed to the environment of HBCUs. The supportive and nurturing environment of HBCUs promotes both collegiality and solidarity so senior faculty want new faculty to succeed. As senior faculty informally communicated the values and expectations of the institution to new faculty, the meaning of information obtained from formal sources was enhanced as new faculty received informal mentoring from their senior colleagues.

Formal Methods

African-American faculty at traditionally white institutions cite a lack of knowledge of promotion and tenure expectations (Exum et al., 1984). This circumstance contrasts with the perceptions of faculty in this study who identified catalogs, faculty handbooks and annual reports as written sources that provided information on values and promotion and tenure expectations of the institution. The university catalog provided a general overview of the institution, including an explicitly written mission statement for the university, the university's perception of itself, as well as academic regulations and requirements governing students.

New faculty at all institutions received a faculty handbook, which delineated the formal guidelines and procedures governing faculty. These guidelines included specific information on promotion and tenure requirements, work loads, terms of employment, sabbaticals and grievance procedures. Also, included in the faculty handbook were general personnel policies, such as library usage, ordering of textbooks for classes, use of postal service, equipment rental and use.

Each year faculty across all institutions completed a survey or report that delineated their teaching, research and service activities and obligations as well as their accomplishments. The annual reports, which were discussed in yearly meetings with the department chair, helped new faculty to clarify the institutional values and expectations of faculty while also providing a formal method to assess their progress in meeting promotion and tenure objectives.

Recent studies have concluded that faculty at traditionally white institutions receive conflicting information regarding promotion and tenure expectations (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996; Tierney & Rhoads, 1994). However, at all of the HBCUs in this study, faculty stated that promotion and tenure procedures were "clearly outlined in the faculty handbook." The voices of faculty across all of the HBCUs can best be articulated through the following comment about the guidelines to achieve promotion and tenure.

> The guidelines are real clear for what I need to do for promotion and tenure and I keep it [faculty handbook] handy right here on my desk. I have been promoted from instructor to assistant and then from assistant to associate and I went by the handbook by their guidelines and I had no problem. So, I feel that if I do what is in the handbook there should be no problem with my obtaining tenure.

At the Doctoral institution in the study a specific number of publications were indicated as necessary to achieve promotion and tenure, while the other HBCUs did not give a quantifiable number of publications necessary for tenure or promotion. Given that there are no measurable promotion and tenure objectives at three of the institutions, it is interesting to note that just over

90 percent of the tenure-track faculty in the study believed that if they strictly followed the faculty handbook they would obtain promotion and tenure. A plausible explanation could be that tenure-track faculty at HBCUs learned values and expectations during their first year at the institution, which gave them time to understand and meet the criteria for promotion and tenure.

Not only were the criteria for evaluation of teaching, research and service in regard to promotion and tenure clearly delineated in the faculty handbook, these criteria were validated through informal conversations with senior faculty who by virtue of their tenure status gave credibility to the information in the faculty handbook. Hence, faculty understood at the beginning of the process how they would be evaluated and what measures would be used to assess whether the criteria had been met.

Department Chairs. While senior faculty at HBCUs generally informed new faculty informally about expectations and institutional values, department chairs were more formal in their interactions with new faculty. Faculty noted that not only did department chairs formally discuss institutional values and promotion and tenure expectations, but they offered suggestions on how to meet the criteria. Additionally, department chairs provided guidance and assistance for solving problems. The annual meeting with the department chair confirmed what faculty found in the handbook as well as what they were told by senior faculty. Thus, meeting with the department chair was a crucial component of the socialization process for new faculty. This indicates that informal and formal colleague support is necessary if new faculty are to be effectively socialized.

Show Me the Ropes

Faculty believed a barrier in the socialization process was the failure of senior faculty to show new faculty the ropes. New faculty frequently reiterated that they not only wanted senior

faculty to inform them about the values and expectations of the institution but they also wanted senior faculty to "show them the ropes" of the institution. The "ropes" of the institution refers to the culture of the department and institution, policies and procedures, key introductions to individuals internal and external to the campus, disclosure of shortcuts, answering questions and telling about recent changes in advising and registration (i.e., change in course numbers and major requirements) that a newcomer to the institution would be unaware of. Even faculty with previous academic experience at other colleges and universities wanted someone to "show them the ropes" of their new institution because each setting has its own unique culture. New faculty indicated they had to learn the ropes of the institution through trial and error or by observation. Studies have found that faculty cite difficulty in learning the informal aspects of organizational culture (Baldwin, 1979; Mager & Myers, 1982). Likewise, Fink's (1992) study concluded that new faculty were not obtaining information on policies, resources, roles and responsibilities from either formal or informal sources in any comprehensive way. A female tenure-track faculty member at Research best describes how faculty at all of the HBCUs in the study perceived the learning process.

> . . . what you really need to know, a lot of the questions that you might have that aren't always easily answered about advising students, about registration - about all the little things that may be written somewhere but you may not know where to go to get the answers.

Faculty perceived that learning the idiosyncrasies of academic life through personal experiences could be minimized if senior faculty would serve as guides by showing new faculty "the ropes" of the institution. This viewpoint is supported by the literature which found that new faculty view senior faculty as role models and guides and depend on them for modeling and nurturing (Boice, 1992; Creswell, 1985; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). A recent graduate, in his

first academic position at Comprehensive, related the importance of senior faculty showing new faculty the ropes.

> If you are new, you are fresh out of college or maybe from a different college the rules are different. The focuses are different; the goals are different. Because of all that you need someone to say, wait a minute this is what you need to focus on but you learn that as you go along.

Showing a new faculty member the ropes can encompass a broad range of activities but one common theme focused on senior faculty informing new faculty about whom to talk to and where to go. Additionally, faculty wanted information, not only regarding spatial location and human resources, but they also wanted an experienced faculty member to inform them about other aspects of the institution such as institutional policies, hierarchical structure and standard operating procedures.

By senior faculty not showing faculty the ropes of the institution it may be an indication that tasks, such as advising and registration, are viewed as peripheral in the criteria for promotion and tenure. On the other hand, when it is time for registration and advising, senior faculty are well into the semester and busy with the many duties required of faculty at HBCUs; thus, senior faculty may be unintentionally not communicating to new faculty about these tasks. Nonetheless, senior faculty are not serving as effective role models for new faculty.

Barrier in the Promotion and Tenure Process

Heavy workload was identified by faculty at all of the HBCUs as a barrier to their pursuit of promotion and tenure. Promotion refers to the advancement through the academic ranks while tenure is the right to a lifetime appointment at an institution barring extenuating circumstances (Caplow and McGee, 1965). Heavy workload revolved around the role expectations of faculty. The average courseload of faculty at HBCUs was four courses per semester. Such a heavy

teaching load leaves little time for faculty to engage in other activities that were used to assess faculty in the promotion and tenure process. Nonetheless, faculty at HBCUs were expected to engage in research, write for publication, obtain grants and engage in service activities on the campus, to the discipline and within the community while maintaining a teaching load of four courses per semester.

Heavy Workload

Faculty in this study perceived they were evaluated on three primary areas - teaching, research and service. However, the weight given each area varied across institutions. In this study, Doctoral, Comprehensive and Liberal Arts were found to be teaching-oriented institutions, which was reflected in the mission, values and courseloads of these institutions. Research's primary focus on scholarship was reflected in its mission and values as well.

The heavy workload of faculty is a barrier in the promotion and tenure process. Three primary areas were found to contribute to the heavy workload of faculty at HBCUs, 1) changing institutional emphasis, 2) lack of time and 3) community involvement.

Changing Institutional Emphasis

At Doctoral, Liberal Arts and Comprehensive, faculty felt that scholarship was beginning to get more focus and many stated that "publications are now getting more weight" in the promotion and tenure process. Faculty also said that if the institution was shifting to emphasize research more that perhaps the average teaching load of four courses per semester needed to be reduced. This changing emphasis on research leaves faculty uncertain about the weight publications would have "since the primary focus is teaching."

Additionally, faculty at these institutions are expected to engage in research and to publish in order to obtain promotion and tenure, but there are no incentives for them to do so

after obtaining tenure or promotion. Faculty at all of the HBCUs cited examples of rewards for teaching but none for research.

Lack of Time

New faculty at all institutions indicate a lack of time to pursue scholarly work (Tierney & Rhoads, 1994). Research found new faculty across all institutions have heavy workloads and are often frustrated by heavy teaching loads (Blau, 1973; Boice, 1992; Fink, 1984). Faculty at HBCUs are no different and are expected to teach a full courseload, generally four courses per semester or twelve semester hours. Faculty at all institutions, even Research, noted there were not enough hours in the day to do research and to teach a full load and find themselves "burning the candle at both ends." Faculty reiterated this across all institutions. A tenured faculty member at Doctoral noted that faculty "get totally immersed in teaching and don't have the time and/or the energy to do the research" which correlates with what previous studies on new faculty found (Boice, 1992; Kerr, 1988).

Heavy teaching loads preclude faculty who desire to pursue more scholarly activities from doing so because they lack the time. However, African-American faculty cannot be expected to continually "overcome" when the mission and expectations are in conflict and faculty are forced to "burn the candle at both ends."

An examination across institutions found that faculty at Doctoral, Liberal Arts and Comprehensive all perceived teaching as the primary focus of the institution with an average courseload of 12 hours or four courses per semester. This contrasts with faculty at Research who perceived research as the primary focus, but who had varied teaching loads in different departments. The number of courses taught by faculty at Research ranged from two to four per

semester. It should be noted that a taskforce at Research has conducted a study on work distribution and is currently examining ways to standardize courseloads across the institution.

Community Involvement

Along with teaching, research and writing grants, faculty are expected to engage in service activities both internal and external to the campus community. Most HBCUs view academic excellence and service to the community as "inextricably intertwined, producing together an appreciation of the relationship between the curriculum and the world beyond the campus" (Kannerstein, 1978, p. 31). Consequently, faculty at all HBCUs in the study were encouraged to be involved in the community from the dean to the department chair. Additionally, Craylen noted faculty involvement in the community could impact the success of funding campaigns. Some new faculty found it challenging to become involved in the community not only because of their heavy work load but because they were new to the community and unfamiliar with their new environment.

The commitment of HBCUs to the community was discussed as an essential institutional value and was mentioned frequently by faculty across all institutions. Jackie's comment best summarizes the perceptions of faculty in the study about the role of community service.

> [Research] really pushes giving back to the community in terms of services, giving back to the minority areas because so many services are not available so that's what our program emphasizes. When we work we go back to under-served communities to provide services.

HBCUs were established to provide education to African-Americans so it is not surprising that their missions and faculty speak of community involvement. However, this commitment to the community as well as the expectation of service to the campus and discipline

contributes to the heavy workload of faculty, therefore impeding their pursuit of promotion and tenure.

Future Research

There are a number of implications for further research generated by this study. While this study provided insight on the socialization experience of African-American faculty at HBCUs, additional studies in this area could provide a comparative analysis of the socialization of other "minority" faculty at HBCUs. Increased attention should be given to investigating the socialization experiences of not only African-American faculty at HBCUs but other groups as well, i.e., Caucasians, Asians and Hispanics. Additionally, an in-depth examination of the role of senior faculty in the socialization process at HBCUs would provide additional insight on the perceptions senior faculty have of their roles and responsibilities in new faculty socialization.

Conclusion

HBCUs provide a supportive environment for all who are a part of the campus family. The environment at HBCUs is one which promotes the support of students, so it is not surprising that faculty find a caring environment at HBCUs as well. It would be difficult for new faculty at HBCUs to provide a nurturing environment for students if they were not being supported, to some degree, by senior faculty. Even though senior faculty did not inform new faculty of the "ropes" of the institution, this barrier does not significantly detract from the overall support senior faculty give to new African-American faculty at HBCUs, such as articulating institutional values and expectations. Hence, African-American faculty at HBCUs are supported and have an overall positive socialization experience. This study suggests that examining African-American faculty socialization at HBCUs can be an important frame for continued understanding of faculty socialization across all institutions.

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